

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2994

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJECT: PCP DRAWS 200,000 TO THREE DAY FESTIVAL

SUMMARY: THE PCP'S THREE-DAY "FESTA DO AVANTE," SEPT 9-11, DREW CLOSE TO 200,000 VISITORS FOR THREE DAYS OF ENTERTAINMENT AND EXPRESSIONS OF DOMESTIC COHESIVENESS AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY. CUNHAL AND THE PARTY MACHINE DEMONSTRATED THEY CAN STILL DRAW THE CROWDS AS THEY SOUGHT TO WARN THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE STILL A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. END SUMMARY.

1. CUNHAL LEADS THE CHARGE: IN TWO MAJOR ADDRESSES, PCP SECRETARY-GENERAL ALVARO CUNHAL DESCRIBED THE FESTIVAL AS A SYMBOL OF THE PARTY'S LINKS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AND AN EXPRESSION OF PCP DOMESTIC COHESIVENESS. CUNHAL REPEATED THE PARTY'S STANDARD CRITICISM OF THE SOCIALISTS FOR THEIR CAPITULATION TO THE RIGHT AND THE FORCES OF INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM

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AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE RURAL, RENT, INDEMNIZATION AND AGRARIAN REFORM ACTS, AND BY PRIME MINISTER SOARES' "PACKAGE TWO" AUSTERITY MEASURES. CUNHAL, HOWEVER, HAS DEEMPHASIZED THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S AUG 1 CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS, WHILE STRESSING THE NEED FOR A "PLATFORM SOLUTION" POSSIBLY INCLUDING DIALOGUE WITH THE PSD AND THE CDS AS WELL AS THE SOCIALISTS.

2. THE EXTRAVAGANZA: THE PCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S HIGHLY PUBLICIZED THREE-DAY FESTIVAL WAS HELD JUST OUTSIDE LISBON WITH SOMETHING FOR ALL AGES -- STEADY ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD, GAMES, AND REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BOOTHS OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS.

THE FESTIVAL WAS DESIGNED TO:

-- CAPITALIZE ON THE PRESENCE OF EUROPEAN AND OTHER FOREIGN COMMUNIST PARTY DELEGATIONS, SOVIET COSMONAUT BORIS VOLINOV, AND MPLA, FRELIMO, AND PAIGN REPRESENTATIVES TO DEMONSTRATE THE PARTY'S INTERNATIONAL LINKS AND COUNTER THE IMAGE OF AN INCREASINGLY ISOLATED PCP AT HOME;

-- BRING THE RANK AND FILE FACE TO FACE WITH SENIOR PARTY LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT. WHERE ELSE, ASKED "O DIARIO", COULD THE PARTY FAITHFUL MEET AND TALK WITH A BULGARIAN SINGER, A SOVIET COSMONAUT, A HUNGARIAN JOURNALIST, AND AN EAST GERMAN NOVELIST?

-- WARN THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT THAT THE PCP REMAINS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH; AND

-- DEMONSTRATE THE PARTY'S SUPERIOR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS. THE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS ALONE GAVE THE PARTY FAITHFUL A RENEWED SENSE OF MOVEMENT AND ACTIVITY.

3. COMMENT: THE "FESTA DO AVANTE" WAS A TRIBUTE TO THE PCP'S ORGANIZATIONAL MACHINE. REGARDLESS OF HOW MANY OF THOSE ATTENDING WERE PARTY FOLLOWERS AND HOW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANY WERE CURIOUS SPECTATORS, THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE MILLING AROUND THE FESTIVAL SITE AND TYPING UP TRAFFIC WEST OF LISBON FOR THREE DAYS. IF PERHAPS LACKING IN SUBSTANCE, THE EVENT GAVE A HIGHLY VISIBLE PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST TO PARTY FOLLOWERS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Executive Order: N/A
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